

Pueblo *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

Project to Conduct Cost Reduction Studies

on page 8

Fall 2004

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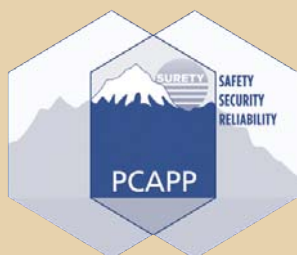
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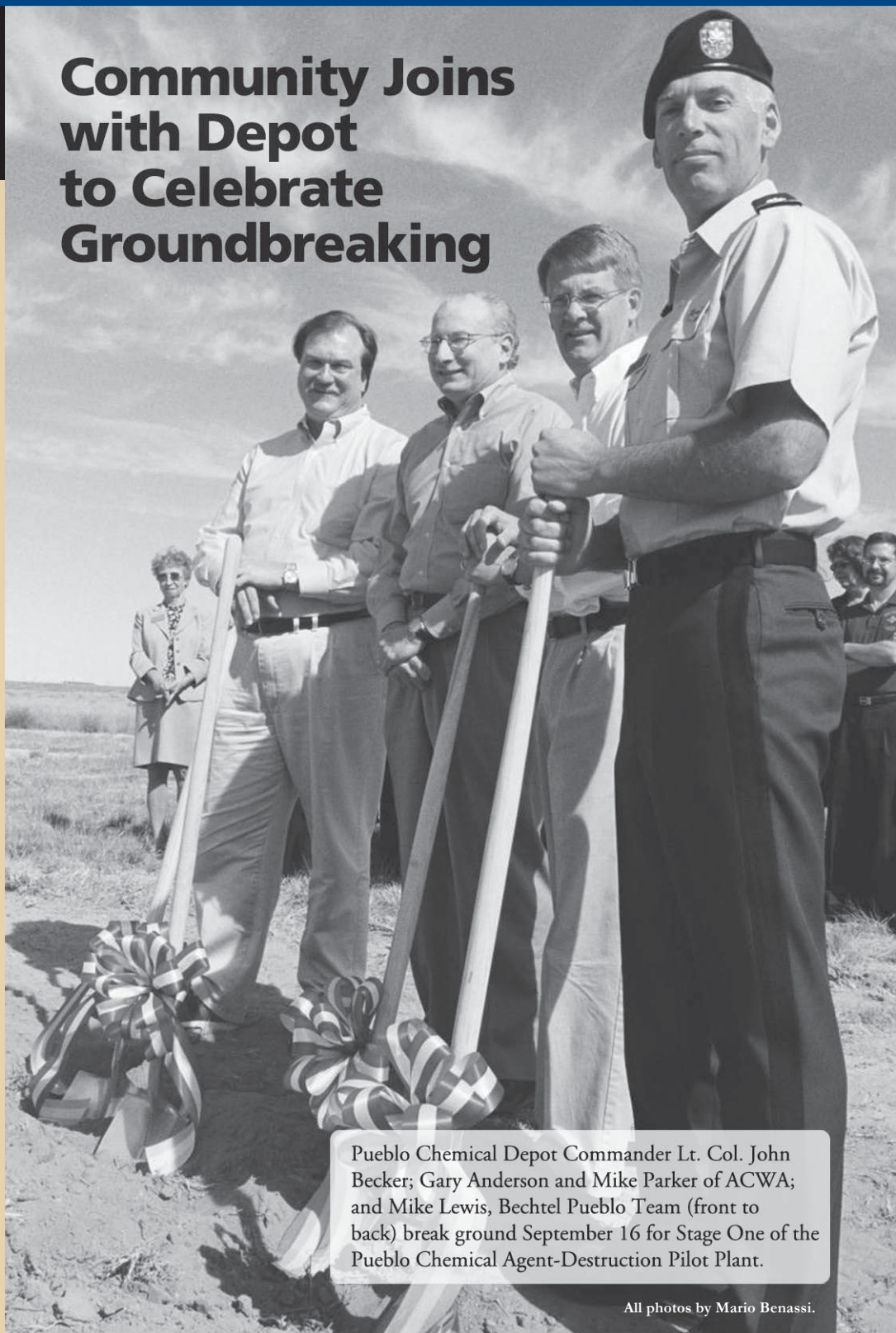
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**Pueblo Chemical Agent-
Destruction Pilot Plant**

www.pmacwa.army.mil

Community Joins with Depot to Celebrate Groundbreaking



Pueblo Chemical Depot Commander Lt. Col. John Becker; Gary Anderson and Mike Parker of ACWA; and Mike Lewis, Bechtel Pueblo Team (front to back) break ground September 16 for Stage One of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

All photos by Mario Benassi.

Pueblo Celebrates Groundbreaking, Honors Depot Employees

After years of anticipation, the Pueblo community gathered on Sept. 18 to celebrate groundbreaking for Stage One construction of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP), which will destroy the mustard-agent munitions stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

In a ceremony in the Hoag Hall auditorium at Colorado State University-Pueblo, elected officials joined government and contractor staff from the project to “honor the past” and “look to the future.”

About 400 current and former depot employees, community members, Army representatives, and employees of the contractor Bechtel Pueblo Team honored past and present depot employees for their dedicated service from the depot’s inception in 1942 as Pueblo Ordnance Depot to the present day.

And they applauded as a commemorative stone was unveiled dedicating the plant to all the men and women who have served at the depot over its 62-year history. The program included an eight-minute video reviewing the history of the depot and culminating with scenes from a ceremonial groundbreaking held by government and contractor personnel at the PCAPP construction site two days earlier.



U.S. Senator Wayne Allard

With members of the Colorado Congressional delegation, Sen. Wayne Allard and Rep. Scott McInnis, on hand, Michael Parker, Program Manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, noted that the event was “the first step in a long journey.”

He called the support of the Pueblo community a “key element in taking us forward,” a theme repeated throughout the morning.

Parker said the depot is “at a real crossroads as it enters its last mission,” adding that he is confident “it will be done well.”

Although the path toward complete disposal of the munitions was sometimes “tortuous,” Parker said the “coming together of the (local) community

smoothed it substantially.”

And he said he looks forward with confidence to the time when the 20,000-acre base 13 miles east of Pueblo can be turned over to the community for development to benefit all of Southern Colorado.

Parker was co-host at the ceremony with Lt. Col. John A. Becker, commander of the depot.

“This is truly a great day for us (in our mission) to provide quality service to the community and the nation,” Becker said.

He outlined highlights of the depot’s service from World War II through expansions during the Korean and Vietnam eras, and noted that during Desert Storm the depot handled and shipped to the Middle East enough water pipeline to stretch from Pueblo to California and back.

Referring to the depot’s next mission of destroying the chemical stockpile, he said, “Now we take very seriously and look forward to this monumental task.”

Sen. Allard pledged his “commitment to completion (of the destruction project) in a timely fashion.”

And he reminded the audience that, while the United States never used chemical weapons on the battlefield, the chemical weapons stockpile served as a major deterrent during the Cold War.

Allard noted that Congress funds the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program to ensure safety of communities surrounding stockpile sites, and he praised the Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management for its service.

Many speakers cited the working partnership developed between the Army, the community, ACWA, and Bechtel and its partners — Parsons, Washington Group, Battelle Memorial Institute, General Atomics and General Physics.

Rep. McInnis cautioned that there will be challenges ahead.

“Putting together a partnership is the easy part,” he said. “Making it work is another matter.”



Color guard from Pueblo Chemical Depot posts the colors at groundbreaking open house.

In the end, he said, partnerships are best when everyone ends up happy.

On behalf of the Department of Defense (DOD), Patrick Wakefield, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical Demilitarization and Threat Reduction, thanked all former, current and future employees at the depot.

Noting that countless government workers have spent thousands of hours on the demilitarization options, Wakefield recalled that two years ago the DOD, Congress and local citizens selected the neutralization process that will be used at the PCAPP facility. He noted that the plant will help ensure that “future generations will be freed of chemical weapons.”

Gary Anderson, master of ceremonies and site project manager for ACWA, knit together remarks from the diverse partners in the project with an historical account of the depot. He pointed out that at every turn of the depot’s mission, “these men and women understood fully the urgency of their mission. They accepted it. They performed it. They accomplished it.”

And he stressed that the creation of the stockpile “has been fully justified and its mission accomplished.

“Now the time has come for us to dispose of the stockpile in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.”

John Klomp, chair of the Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens’ Advisory Commission (CAC) and a Pueblo County commissioner, called the ceremony a “very festive occasion, a long-awaited celebration for the entire community.”

He traced the community’s exploration of various ways that the 780,000 rounds of munitions could be destroyed until 1999 when the CAC endorsed the water neutralization/bio-treatment process.

He praised the hard work of the Congressional delegation, DOD, ACWA, Bechtel, and “a unified community.”

And he told the audience that “your faith, spirit and pride of our community made (it

possible) to leave a legacy to do the job and to do it now.”

Pueblo County Commission Chair Loretta Kennedy welcomed the out-of-town guests to Pueblo. She offered a salute to all those who have worked at the depot as “a vital part of Pueblo,” including many local, state and federal employees who have helped to make the project a reality.

Howard Roitman, Director of Environmental Programs for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, represented the State of Colorado at the event. He and his staff are responsible for permits for the plant and for monitoring compliance on a continuing basis.

He noted that the demilitarization project was accelerated by the Department of Defense following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Roitman said it was possible to speed up the permitting process because of ACWA’s leadership, the experience of Bechtel and the involvement and support of the public.

Mike Lewis, Project Manager for the Bechtel Pueblo Team, thanked the community for the warm welcome his team has received the past two years.

“We are a small family, but we are becoming a larger family,” he said.

Lewis noted that the contractor is committed to safe destruction of the stockpile, open communications, and opportunities for local employees and businesses.

Fay Kastelic, one of the original members of the CAC and a former Pueblo City Council member, delighted the crowd when she took the microphone from the podium and walked to center stage to make her remarks.

Calling it a “day to celebrate,” she paused to recognize the work of her fellow CAC members, including some who have served since the original members were appointed by former Gov. Roy Romer in 1993.

And she pointed out that the Bechtel Pueblo Team “has been gracious at every turn.”

Speaking directly to her fellow Puebloans, she said, “I trust the citizens of Pueblo. I thank



Gary Anderson and Mike Parker observe as Tor Bennedsen and Col. (Ret.) James Bates unveil the stone dedicating the PCAPP facility to past and present employees of Pueblo Chemical Depot.

them for their participation as we have gathered over many years to make decisions about how to destroy chemical weapons.”

The cornerstone that dedicates the PCAPP facility to past and present depot employees was unveiled by former depot commander, retired Col. Jim Bates, and firefighter Tor Bennedsen, the depot’s newest employee. Bennedsen joined the depot in June after five years of active duty in the Air Force.

The plaque reads in part “dedicated to the men and women of the United States Army Pueblo Chemical Depot whose contributions to our nation’s defense have brought great honor upon themselves and their community.”

At the beginning of the program, the colors were posted by National Guard soldiers from Task Force Pueblo, a part of the chemical site defense force on guard at the depot 24 hours a day.

Introductory music was provided by members of the Pueblo County High School band.

Following the ceremony, the audience and dignitaries adjourned to a buffet reception sponsored by the Bechtel Pueblo Team.



About 400 people attended the Groundbreaking Open House in the Hoag Hall auditorium at CSU-Pueblo.



Guests are greeted by PCAPP staff.



An ensemble from the Pueblo County High School band, under the direction of Mark Emery, provided music for the event.

Honoring the Past Looking to the Future



Congressman Scott McInnis greets CAC member Fay Kastelic.



Speakers (from left) Mike Parker, John Klompare, Congressman Scott McInnis, Pat Wakefield, Fay Kastelic, and Mike Lewis, with master of ceremonies.



Depot retiree Reuben Rodriguez looks at a collection of memorabilia.

the Past, the Future



Tomp, Loretta Kennedy, Sen. Wayne Allard, Wakefield, Lt. Col. John Becker, Howard Roitman, Fay ceremonies Gary Anderson on the screen.



Fay Kastelic offers a community perspective.



Pat Wakefield of the Office of Secretary of Defense and Lt. Col. John Becker, Commander, Pueblo Chemical Depot.



Howard Roitman of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment addresses the crowd.



Cadets from the Army ROTC program at CSU-Pueblo assisted with the open house. From left are Cadets Nick Oates, Alan Alvis, Alex Terekhov, Luke Groninger, Matt Massingill, and Ben Brown with faculty member Maj. Dave Mount.

Former Employees Recall Hard Work, Friendships, Dedicated Service

Two white-haired men pored over a thick scrapbook at a corner table where treasured memories were recorded.

“My name’s in there,” Wes Moore said with satisfaction as he and Sam Valdez turned away to take in an array of other exhibits in the foyer to the auditorium at Hoag Hall at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

The men were early arrivals for an open house Sept. 18 celebrating groundbreaking for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) to be built at the Army depot 13 miles east of Pueblo.

From the moment they were greeted at the door by members of the PCAPP and depot staff, about 400 former and current military and civilian depot employees and members of the community were treated to an event with the theme, “Honoring the Past, Looking to the Future.”

They received packets that contained the program and a commemorative memory

booklet with more than two dozen recollections—some funny, some winsome—from men and women of the depot.

Nestled in the packet was a tan postcard-sized “Certificate of Appreciation” honoring the past and present depot employees, and attached to the card was a tiny, golden spade lapel pin. Guests also received a button proclaiming, “Proud Member – Pueblo Depot Family.” Students from the CSU-Pueblo President’s Leadership Council and cadets from the university’s ROTC program led them to seats in the auditorium.

Moore and Valdez were typical of the depot retirees. Valdez was an equipment missile specialist in the missile systems division from 1954 to 1972. He transferred to Europe to represent Pueblo at the Hawk missile site in Germany and retired home to Pueblo from Pennsylvania in 1989.

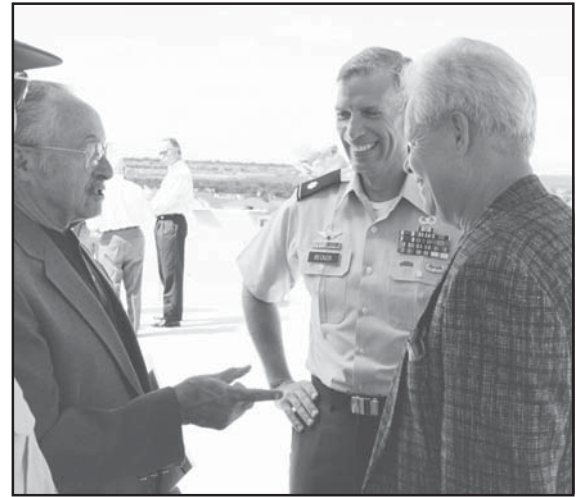
Moore’s story is much the same. A quality assurance specialist, he was at the depot from 1952 to 1980, with a five-year stint in Germany in the 1970s.

After a program of speeches and unveiling of a commemorative stone dedicating the new plant to the very employees in the audience, guests were treated to a buffet hosted by the Bechtel Pueblo Team under a tent on a patio outside the auditorium.

Old friends hugged each other. Out-of-town visitors admired the view of the Rockies from CSU-Pueblo’s scenic hilltop campus.

One trio of women, representing nearly a century of service, chatted happily as they stood in the buffet line. One of them, Thelma Bates, retired from the depot in 1985 after 37 years of service.

“We packed, we processed, we shipped,” she said, nodding to her companions, Charity Collins, who put in 23 years between 1951 and 1974, and Thelma Currington, a 34-year



Lt. Col. John Becker (center) visits with depot retiree Steve Csogi (left) and Pueblo civic leader Marv Stein.

veteran in the ammunition department where she retired as a foreman.

Anna Lofing came to honor her late husband, John, who spent 27 years as a forklift operator. And Dan Aragon, who retired in 2000 as director of chemical operations, brought his family to celebrate and remember his late father, Archie, who was an ammunition worker in the 1950s.

The celebration wasn’t confined to old-timers. In August, Jan Wards transferred to the PCAPP project from the weapons destruction plant at Tooele, Utah, where she worked for 11 years. She and her husband, Ray, chose to live in Fowler, east of the depot, where he owns Bushy’s Blue Sky Motel.

And Bob Mock marveled at the deceptive distances that stretch from the prairie to the mountains. Mock moved to Pueblo in July from Houston. His wife, Debra, has been a Bechtel employee for 28 years and is the company’s Business Manager for the local project.

Undoubtedly the youngest family member at the party was seven-week-old Kaitlyn Dotson, whose proud father Dan carried her through the crowd, while mom, Kristi, and Kaitlyn’s 4-year-old sister Kara mingled. The Dotsons live in Beulah, and Kristi worked as an administrative assistant for the Bechtel Pueblo Team up until Kaitlyn’s birth.



Guests enjoy scrapbooks from depot archives.



Citizens' Advisory Commission Chair John Klomp and wife Pat at reception.



Marilyn Thompson, Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Officer, greets CSU-Pueblo Leadership students Tara Miner and Melanie Basterrechea. The students assisted with the program.



Guests enjoy refreshments on the patio of Hoag Hall at a reception sponsored by Bechtel Pueblo Team.

Public Meeting Oct. 26 for Phase Two Permit

The Army and the Bechtel Pueblo Team submitted a permit modification request to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on Sept. 28 for the second of a three-phase permit to build the PCAPP facility.

A public information meeting to discuss this permit modification request will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2004 at the Pueblo Convention Center.

Phase One of the permit, issued in July 2004, addressed the first stage of construction, including site clearing and grading and installation of underground utilities, temporary construction facilities, and a warehouse. Phase Two of the permit will cover the second stage of construction, which includes a variety of support facilities, such as utility, laboratory, and maintenance buildings, standby diesel generators, entry control facilities, and a waste storage building.

Copies of the permit modification request are available for review during regular business hours at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 East Abriendo Ave., Pueblo; the Avondale Water and Sanitation District, 321 Third St., Avondale; and Boone Town Hall, 100 Baker Street, Boone. Copies are also available at the Outreach Office at 301 N. Main St., Suite 306B, Pueblo, telephone (719) 546-0400.



Project to Conduct Studies to Reduce Costs of Facility

Design work on the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant's processing buildings will cease for approximately nine months while the project team conducts trade studies to examine design alternatives that could reduce project costs. "Processing" refers to those areas of the plant where the weapons' energetics materials and chemical agent will be accessed, removed and neutralized.

For the past several months, the Department of Defense has been evaluating options to reduce costs associated with the plant slated to be built to destroy the U.S. Army Pueblo

Chemical Depot's chemical weapons stockpile. Evaluations are focused on optimizing cost and schedule, with safety being the priority, while looking at various ways to build a smaller plant with fewer operating personnel than the facility currently being designed. There will be no changes to the selected destruction technology, neutralization followed by biotreatment.

The approach to designing and building the Pueblo plant includes three stages: 1) site preparation; 2) support facilities; and 3) processing facilities. With all of the required

environmental permits issued to begin Stage One construction, the project team expects to award subcontracts and begin Stage One construction shortly. The Stage Two permit application was submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on Sept. 28 and the design of Stage Two support facilities will continue to be refined.

A public meeting is scheduled for Oct. 26 at 7 p.m. at the Pueblo Convention Center to provide the public with information about the permit application and answer questions about the project.

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